

Latham Letter

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 4

FALL 1998

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

Single issue price: \$4.00

For the Birds!

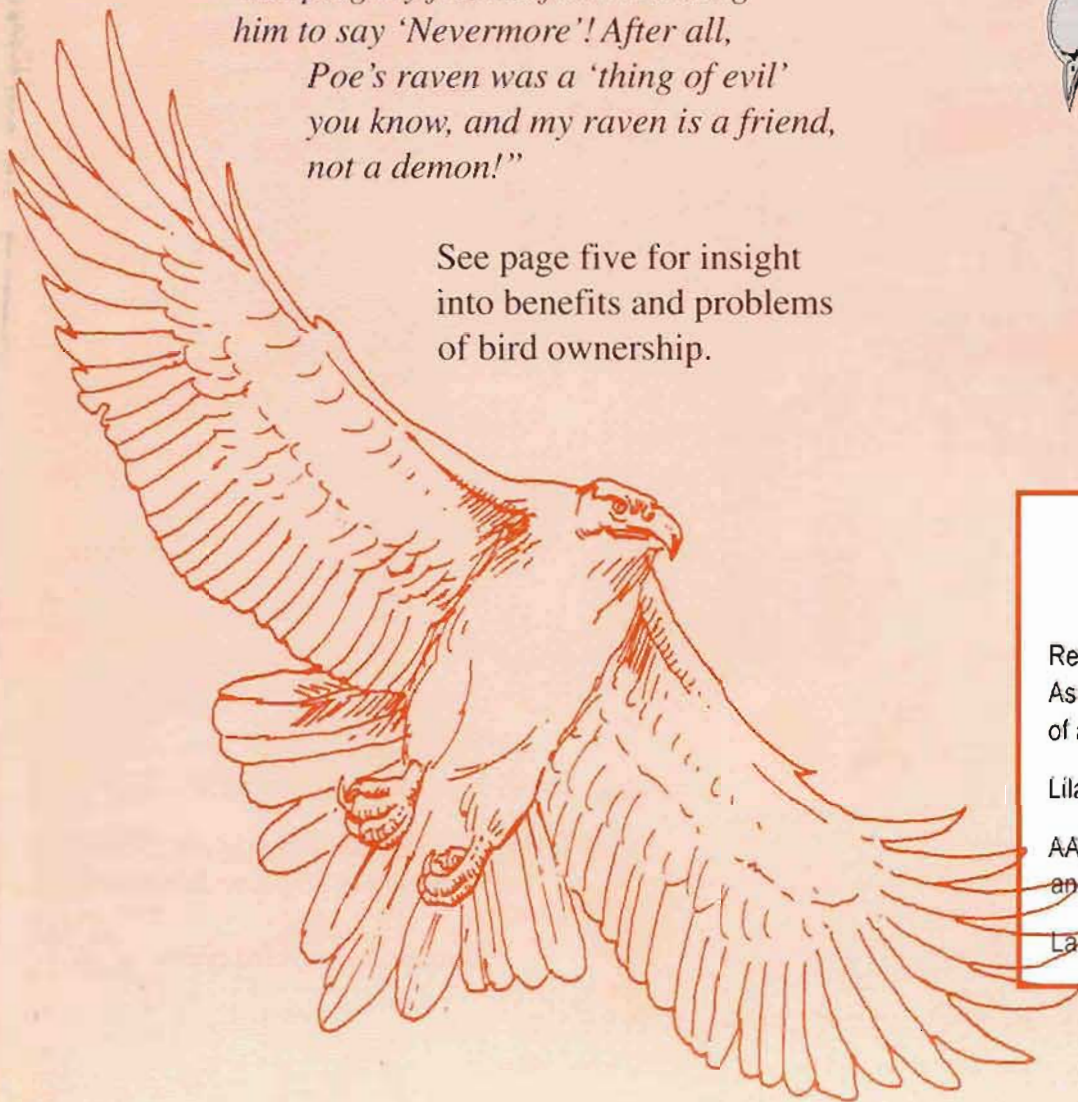
Research sheds light on human-bird interactions.

"What is the greatest problem you have in taking care of your pet raven?"

"Keeping my friends from teaching him to say 'Nevermore'! After all,

Poe's raven was a 'thing of evil' you know, and my raven is a friend, not a demon!"

See page five for insight into benefits and problems of bird ownership.



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The Latham Letter

Vol. XIX, No. 4, Fall 1998

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities



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The Latham Foundation is a 501(C)(3) private operating foundation founded in 1918 to promote respect for all life through education. The Foundation makes grants-in-kind rather than monetary grants. Latham welcomes partnerships with other institutions and individuals who share its commitment to furthering humane education.

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Edith Latham's Mandate ...

*"To promote, foster, encourage and
further the principles of humaneness,
kindness and benevolence
to all living creatures."*

Editorial



Hugh H. Tebault, III, President



Expectations

As I compose this column, Latham is preparing for a major strategy meeting bringing people together from all around the country to discuss potential directions for Latham to take in the future to further humane education. You will read more about this meeting on page 12 of this issue. I have been setting expectations on goals, themes, and outcomes which I hope will be obtained by bringing this diverse group together.

This is also the 80th year of operation for Latham. During our long history, we have enjoyed the benefit of insightful leadership and more importantly the fervent and dedicated participation of staff and volunteers in our endeavor to teach

the precepts of humane education. This work is not as visible as saving the old growth redwoods from destruction or sea birds from an oily death. This is a subtle approach whereby being kind to animals leads naturally to kindness to each other. Through teaching this simple premise to children we are setting the expectation that as they grow they will share with others the kindness they have received.

Editorials are a new medium for me. As I endeavor to act as an encourager and leader by example in matters of Latham principles, I challenge you to adopt them into your daily activities as well. I am interested in knowing how you receive this message and the

articles which follow. *I would like to hear your thoughts on how Latham can fulfill its mandate given years ago "to promote, foster, encourage and further the principles of humaneness, kindness and benevolence to all living creatures..."*

Please write, fax or e-mail me at the Latham office: Latham Plaza Building, 1826 Clement Street, Alameda, California 94501. Phone 510-521-0920, Fax 510-521-9861, e-mail: Lathm@aol.com

Those who have worked at Latham before have properly set expectations high. Thank you for your ongoing support of Latham. Share kindness with someone today.



Benefits and Problems of Bird Ownership

*Aline H. Kidd and Robert M. Kidd
University of California – Davis*

"What is the greatest problem you have in taking care of your pet raven?" "Keeping my friends from teaching him to say 'Nevermore'! After all, Poe's raven was a 'thing of evil' you know, and my raven is a friend, not a demon!"

Previous studies of human-animal relationships have revealed that bird owners are easy-going, nurturing, very sociable animal lovers, and that the majority have at least one pet of another species in addition to their bird or birds. Bird owners with more than one pet are as attached to their birds as to their cats, dogs, and whatever other animals they fancy.

Naturally, owners' interactions with their birds differ considerably from interactions with four-legged pets. Loving owners cannot run in the park with their birds, nor expect them to sleep at or on their feet at night. And though birds can and will cuddle closely with their owners, two legs, wings, and a beak call for a little closer attention paid to the basic fragile nature of birds as pets. Obviously, the pleasures and anxieties of bird ownership differ in kind, if not in strength, from those of four-legged pet ownership.

To learn more about the specific benefits and problems of bird

ownership, we interviewed fifty men and fifty women bird-owning adults at bird and specialty pet stores. The interactions and responses of customers and visiting bird owners were most interesting and amusing.

As potential customers entered at one specialty pet store, the store owner's own Cockatoo would begin singing "How much is that doggie in the window?" an immediate attention-getter if we ever heard one!

We learned, however, from owners who came in to buy food, playthings, or other supplies for their birds, that 77% of them did indeed have other pets at home as well. And 62% of these multiple pet owners preferred their birds to the other pets, while only 17% preferred their dogs and 8% preferred their cats.

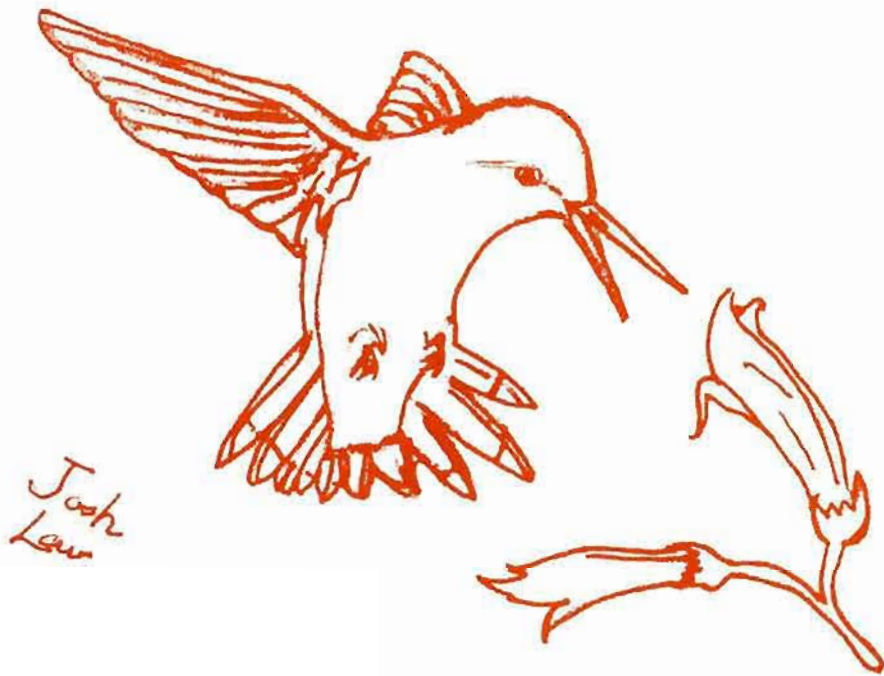
Besides birds and other pets, 39% of the people we interviewed also had beloved children at home. Of these bird-owning parents, 33% reported that their children also loved and helped care for the birds; 31% said the kids merely liked or tolerated the birds; 23% said their children were quite indifferent to the birds, and only 13% admitted the kids really disliked or feared birds.



All 100 adults gave more than one answer as to what they enjoyed most about their birds: 33% enjoyed the lively companionship; 28% loved their birds which talked to them and to each other; 22% appreciated the entertainment the birds gave them, and 14% owned and enjoyed their singing birds.

One lady mentioned she had owned "Budgies" before she got married, but her new husband forced her to sell them after the wedding. "But after a few months I threw my husband out of the house and got my Budgies back," she declared firmly. "They're much more entertaining than husbands!"

They all agreed in their answers when asked what the major problems with bird ownership might be: 37% quickly mentioned the messiness; 20% included the noise, and 18% claimed they had no problems at all. However, 5% mentioned it took much of their free time to care properly for the birds, and 6%



See page ten
for an addendum

said they did have some problem finding an appropriate "baby sitter" for their birds while the family went on vacation.

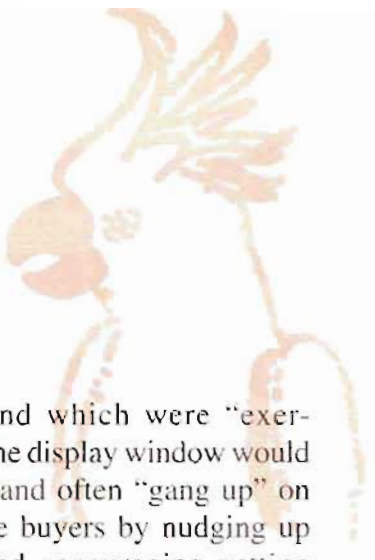
Some of the larger parrot species apparently can develop individual personalities of their own which can become a real problem. One man told us about his buying a colorful Macaw as a present for his wife and when she gingerly reached to accept it from him, the Macaw jumped onto her hand, looked her in the eye, said "stupid woman" and bit her hand that held him. Obviously the man had not inquired about the bird's personality from its previous owner. He still has the Macaw, but his wife won't talk to it, touch it, or go near it.

Despite the universal enthusiasm for birds expressed by the owners we interviewed, none of them believed that everyone should own a bird: 61% felt that "patience" was absolutely necessary for successful bird ownership; 29% said that bird owners must be "friendly", and 27% that a relaxed attitude was a "must." A caring, and a warm affectionate nature were also mentioned as necessary personality traits.

We had wondered why birds were the fourth most popular pet in the U.S. The ability many bird species have for learning to reproduce human speech sounds and forms may be one reason why human-avian interactions are so successful. Too, natural avian intelligence permits training many birds to do such entertaining "tricks" as singing on cue, pulling small carts in mimic chariot races and other circus-like stunts, playing "dead" on command, selecting appropriate I-Ching" or oriental fortune sticks with seeming psychic skill and so forth.

"52% of the multiple pet owners said they preferred birds to their other pets."

For that matter, birds seem to possess a natural affectionate behavior that endears them to humans. At the bird and specialty pet shops where we interviewed, we observed birds flying to owners who had them in for care or vet "tune ups." We also noticed that many of the larger birds



for sale and which were "exercising" in the display window would sidle over and often "gang up" on prospective buyers by nudging up to them and encouraging petting and cuddling behaviors from the humans by chirping, nipping, or talking to them.

Obviously, human-avian interactions can be as close, if not closer, than human-dog or human-cat interactions when patient, warm, and caring humans become bird owners. It should be emphasized, however, that the tame bird behaviors discussed by bird owners are very different from the typical behaviors of wild birds. The birds discussed by the people we interviewed had all been bred, hatched, raised, and hand-fed by humans until they were old enough to feed and fend by themselves. They became imprinted by and to humans and had human rather than bird parents.

Our informants ultimately taught us that human-avian interrelationships are only valid with birds "raised from scratch" in civilized environments. The lesson to learn is to leave wild birds and their babies to the wilds of nature. They can never become the wonderful, loving, bird companions that tame cage birds are with their human owners.

*Aline H. Kidd and Robert M. Kidd,
Center for Animals in Society
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University of
California - Davis.*



Frances Speaks Her Mind

Want to walk off those holiday pounds? Walk your dog?

I had just curled up for a snooze in the sun the other day, when I heard something come crashing and panting through the bushes. A dog! thought I, and, leaping to my feet, I arched my back and pumped myself up to twice life-size. Sure enough, here comes a big mutt, snuffling through the grass with six feet of chain dragging from his collar. There was really no danger, since he was on the opposite side of the fence, so it occurred to me that I might interview him for this column.

"Oh, drooling one," I called out (never cut a dog an inch of slack, that's my motto), "Oh, large-footed lumbering beast, come and give us the canine point of view."

"Huh?" the dog said, lifting his snout from the ground.

"I am a journalist," I replied. "Tell me what's on a dog's mind, and I will set your thoughts in type."

He jangled over to the fence, tripping on his chain.

"Okay, cat," he said, "But let's make it snappy. I don't have much time." I'd often heard this dog barking, but this was the first time I'd laid eyes on him. He wasn't bad looking for a dog – a long-legged mutt with a curly grey coat and deep brown eyes.

"Where are you off to in such a hurry?" I asked, "And why are you

dragging that chain along?"

"I broke loose," he said, "This is the first time I've been free in months. Before my humans discover I'm gone, I want to run and sniff and have a little fun." He dropped down on his front legs with his hind end up and his tail beating the air.

"Come out and play with me, cat," said he.

"Maybe some other time," I answered, polite as could be, but to myself I was thinking, In your dreams, dog.

"There won't be another time," he sighed, and his hind quarters collapsed to the ground. "My humans will fix the chain, and I'll never get loose again."

"Don't they take you for walks?" I asked.

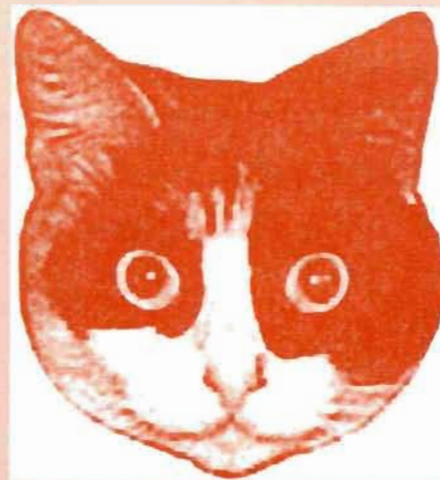
"They hardly spend any time with me at all," he said, "Just a pat on the head when they bring me dinner, and that's it."

"That's horrible," I said, "I can't imagine sitting in the same patch of dirt every day."

"And I'm lonely," he whined, "We dogs hate to be alone. I'm always happy to see my humans, even though they don't take good care of me. It's a dog's nature to be loyal."

"Why do they even have you?" I asked.

"They think they need a watch



Frances is the official spokescat for the Hawaii Island Humane Society.

dog," he said. "But if they don't have time to play with me or take me for walks, maybe they should have gotten one of those electronic alarms instead."

"Well, run along and enjoy yourself while you can," I said. Well, I tell you, readers, that dog almost had me in tears. You know, it seems to me it wouldn't be that hard for those people to pay more attention to their pet and take him for a walk once a day. They probably could use the exercise themselves. You know my motto: It's not that hard to do the right thing!

If you would like to reprint 'Frances Speaks Her Mind' in your organization's newsletter, please contact Lisa Fowler at the Hawaii Island Humane Society, 74-5225 Queen Kaahumanu Hwy, Kailua-Kona, HI, 96740 (808) 329-8002

Special thanks to Christine Heliker, the outspoken feline's human and adept transcriber.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



The Marin, San Francisco, Napa and Sonoma
Child Abuse Prevention Councils

present

Violence Against Children: Innovations in Child Abuse Intervention and Treatment



April 8 and 9, 1999
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
at the College of Marin
Kentfield, CA

Keynote Speaker: Karen Pryor

A conference designed to provide practical
interventions for professionals who work with
at-risk families in a culturally competent context.

Twelve (12) hours of Continuing Education
Credit (CEUs) available to LCSWs and MFCCs;
Board of Behavioral Sciences Provider #PCE499;
CEUs for nurses pending.

Clicker Training

The Humane Society of Sonoma County sponsors Karen Pryor in a one-day
workshop, Sunday April 11th. Learn the latest innovations in this
revolutionary method of shaping behaviors without force or correction.

For information: 707-542-0882, Ext. 213.

Building a Civil Society: Preventing Violence through Community Engagement and Collaboration

The Second National
Leadership
Conference for
Grantmakers,
March 24-26, 1999
Fort Worth, Texas

For information, call
212-344-0195



Excerpts from a Therapy Dog's Diary – *Chapter 13*



Jenni Dunn, Therapy Dog

October 23, 1996

Another great day of getting to visit patients. I'm sure glad Mom did some checking around and found a hospital that was open to my visitation expertise. When we enter the lobby, the lady at the information desk now says, "Hi Jenni" and doesn't even speak to Mom. I don't think she has even noticed that I bring Mom with me when I come.

The nurses were crazy over me today. I don't know *what* Mom was thinking but she took a wrong turn and ended up in Obstetrics by mistake. We don't visit patients there but made a big hit with the nurses on that wing. It was obvious they liked dogs as well as babies. The hospital newspaper had done an article about me so most of them already knew I worked there.

On the Rehab unit I had a visit with a very special patient who was especially glad for my visit. He cried when he told Mom just how much he missed his own dog at home and told us how much it meant to him to be able to stroke my fur and feed me treats. I am glad I was there for him. As I enter the unit it is noticeable how everyone who sees me gets a sparkle in their eye and a smile on their face when they see me. Today a man in his wheelchair practiced his driving as he followed me everywhere I went. He said he remembered me from my last visit when he couldn't get out of bed. He surely was making good use of his newfound mobility.

November 6, 1996

Several of the patients, who were still in the hospital from my last visit, remembered me and called me by name. Everyone I saw, nurses and patients alike, had to stop what they were doing and pet me. My first visit was to a lady who said she was afraid of dogs but invited us into her room anyway. Before we left, she was smiling a big grin and even let me eat treats out of her hand. She had just had hip replacement surgery but she forgot about her pain while we were there.

We visited a very special lady who had a patch over one eye and was blind in the other. We almost

didn't ask to be invited in because we thought she was asleep but we were glad we did. She insisted we come in and insisted that I put my feet on her bed so she could pet me and feed me treats. She did a great job for someone who couldn't see.

The patient in the next room had only one leg and was most anxious for me to visit. It seems he had three Labradors just like me at home and also had a Rottweiler. He had to take time to tell me about each one of them.

The next lady acted like she had been waiting all day for my visit. She fed me treats, gave me hugs and kisses, and I know I made her feel much better.

January 8, 1997

It had been a long time since I had worked because I had ruptured a joint capsule in my leg playing with Dad in the snow. I had a big knot on my leg. The doctor had drained it but I hurt it again and had to go back to see him again. I was supposed to stay off my leg for six weeks. Now how is a four legged dog supposed to do that?

Six weeks is a lifetime! Mom wrapped my leg with a neon green bandage and took me to the hospital anyway. I was so excited that I was trembling all over. Several people asked about my bandage and the patients gave me lots of sympathy. One of the nurses got down on the floor to give me a big hug and told me she was glad I was back, that my visits just made her day. That, in turn, made my day!

Of course. I met my usual admirers in the lobby. I am a big hit down there and as usual, I put lots of smiles on patients' faces today. A couple of the patients were unable to talk but that didn't keep them from smiling at me.

We visited one patient who was a quadriplegic. He couldn't move anything but his eyes, but he got a smile on his face when Mom put my treat on his wheelchair tray and he watched me struggle to get it. You could see his love for me in his eyes.

Editor's Note:

Jenni recently retired from active therapy due to failing health. Our thoughts are with her and her human, Linda Dunn.



The creeping things of the Earth will give you lessons, and the first of the sea provide you an explanation:

There is not one such creature but will know that the hand of God has arranged things like this!

In His hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of every human being!

Job 6-10

Addendum for all Bird Lovers' Characteristics

See related article on page six.

"Your study of pet bird ownership ignores people who have outside backyard feeders for the wild birds, and those of us who have caged pet birds as well as feeding wild birds."

This is a fair criticism since Horvath and Roelans' 1991 study suggested that relationships with wild birds at a feeder will vary considerably in terms of duration and controllability of contact from those of a pet bird owner who also feeds wild birds, or a pet bird only owners' relationships. In short, most wild bird people don't spend much time with any single bird and most have little control over any real contact with wild birds. We therefore presumed that they would report having very different problems and benefits from their interactions with wild birds than the pet caged bird-owners had.

We promptly added 50 (25 men, 25 women) more subjects (50 in each group) to the original study to cover all three groups of interested-in-birds people: pet bird owners only; pet bird owners who also feed wild birds, and people who feed only wild birds.

All three groups enjoyed looking at the different owned or wild birds, watching the bird-bird and bird-human interactions, and admiring their presence and beauty. All three groups mentioned messiness, noise, and finding "bird-sitters" for vacations as problems. The pet bird owners who also fed wild birds mentioned neighbor's (and their own) cats, squirrels, bees, ants, Blue Jays and other aggressive large birds as "other problems." All three groups agreed that people who cared for birds were characterized by their patience and friendliness, their affectionate concern for birds and the



ecology, and their insatiable curiosity.

One notable difference between subjects who owned only pet birds and those who only fed wild birds was recorded: "It is important to catch birds from as many species as possible and place them in aviaries where they could reproduce and so prevent the continuing loss of bird species," insisted four subjects who only owned pet birds. "It's morally wrong to own pet caged birds whose physical maintenance needs the exercise of flight and natural survival abilities," responded six subjects (two men and four women) who were in the "feed only wild birds" group.

It seems clear, now, that bird people of all kinds are indeed warm, caring, and patient persons who demonstrate their on-going curiosity and concerns about the conservation of the ecology and preservation of all bird species daily, whether they are pet bird owners only or also feed wild birds or feed wild birds only. Any suggested major differences are just not important to them.

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Lilah

Lucy Aron

"I saw the secret police downtown today," Lilah says.

"How do you know they were secret police?" I ask.

"A voice from my ghetto blaster told me."

"Wow. Radio Shack must be selling a new kind of boom box. What else did the voice tell you?"

"And there's a temple in the sky with gazelles and magnolia trees. But you have to be on God's holy list to go there," she whispers.

I'm sitting on a couch next to Lilah, who I just met at Fellowship Club, a county-run outpatient center for the social rehabilitation of mentally ill adults. Zach, my Therapy Dog, and I are on our second visit. Zach's a gangly sweetheart of a Golden Retriever who's a bit long in the back and leggy, but a creature awesomely at home wherever he finds himself and with whomever.

About forty people, all low-income and ranging in age from twenty to eighty, are sitting on tattered couches or milling around the building's large front room. There's little interaction, though a shard of conversation can be heard from time to time. Most just sit staring at the air, looking more bored-or-medicated-than-demented. One man rests his head on an elbow, eyes closed. Generic rock music blasts from a stereo on a shelf next to a dime store goldfish bowl. A rickety upright piano sits mute against the wall.



Therapy dog, Zach

Lilah is petting Zach, who sits on the floor between us. She starts at the tip of his nose, methodically works her way up to the top of his head, down to his shoulders, then back to the tip of his nose again. Zach sits placid as a Buddha, reveling in her strokes. Watching them, a line from Whitman flashes through my head, "What is less, or more, than a touch?" I wonder how much touch, if any, the people at Fellowship Club get.

Like many here, Lilah has the look of a street person – a few teeth short of the full complement, clothes more reminiscent of the Salvation Army than Versace. She's fortyish with long black hair and an aura of bewilderment and apprehension.

"Do you think dogs are in that temple in the sky, too?" I ask.

She looks at Zach. "Oh, definitely. Dogs are better than people

with cold hearts. And there're ponies up there, too," she says, eyes shining.

"It sounds like a terrific place," I say.

There's a pause in our dialogue. I'm uneasy with small talk in any social situation, but work harder here at Fellowship Club to push past my discomfort. "How do you like this cold weather?"

"Whatever weather God gives us I like," Lilah answers.

"You'll live a long life with an attitude like that. Lots of people complain about the cold and the rain, and anything else they can dig up to complain about."

"And I think of the rain as angels crying."

"That's beautiful. You're not a poet, are you?"

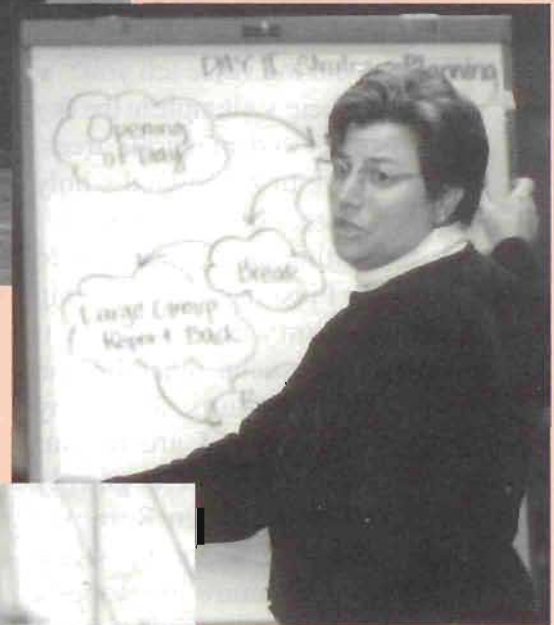
continued on page 14

Latham Plans for the Future at Strategic Planning Meeting

**October
29-31,
1998**



Some of the participants in Latham's Strategic Planning Meeting, l to r: Julie Bank, Chris Spelius, Frank Wittwer, Su Schlagel, Rick Johnson, Lee Zasloff, Marion Holt, Lisa Spinali (kneeling), Denise Cahalan, Byron Wagner, Cheri Jones, Laura Thompson, Hugh Tebault, Noel Dedora, Judy Johns, Phil Arkow, Roberta Wallis



Facilitator Lisa Spinali



Latham Board Member Noel Dedora and Foundation Members Su Schlagel and Frank Wittwer



The Year In Review

Latham's activities in 1998 were distinguished by a transition in leadership and a major planning initiative. The year brought both exciting changes and a glimpse into the Foundation's future as a publisher, producer, facilitator, sponsor, and colleague.

After more than fifty years of dedicated service, Hugh H. Tebault II retired as President. His son, Hugh H. Tebault III, succeeded him. As Hugh Jr. explains, "The enduring simplicity of the Latham message has stood the test of generations ... Ever-progressing communication etchnologies, shifts in the society's mores, and changes in family patterns have challenged Latham to adjust its method of delivery – but the message remains the same: promoting respect for *all* life through education."

Latham is a private operating foundation that does not make grants, but rather, uses its resources to highlight the importance of universal kinship and respect for all life. It is a clearinghouse for information about humane issues and activities and a catalyst for responsible thought and action.

Latham continues its work of assisting in the publication of materials for the Human Companion Animal Bond and is concerned with violence and abuse, with a major publication on that subject scheduled for publication early in 1999. *The Latham Letter* is now in its nineteenth year of publication and enjoys an ever-widening readership. The Search for Excellence Humane Video Awards, which encourage and recognize videotaped productions promoting respect for all life, received many excellent entries.

The Latham Foundation's Guiding Principles

To inculcate the higher principles of humaneness upon which the unity and happiness of the world depend,

To foster a deeper understanding of and sympathy with animals, who cannot speak for themselves,

To emphasize the spiritual fundamentals that lead to world friendship, and

To promote character-building through an understanding of universal kinship.



Latham Board Member Laura Thompson received the American Humane Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in October.

Pictured from left to right: American Humane's Executive Director Bob Hart, Laura Thompson, and Carol Moulton, AHA's Director of Animal Protection Division.

Am I doing this right or am I a dud, I'm thinking? Will I be liked, accepted? These people, often viewed as society's rejects and treated accordingly, don't trust easily. I lean my shin against Zach's back for encouragement. His stillness fortifies me.

"I can tell you're a good person and an honest person," Lilah says.

I'm startled by the compliment and its timing. Just when I was beginning to lapse into self-doubt. I gather myself and say, smiling, "And I can tell you're an excellent judge of character."

We both break out in a huge laugh. It's a spontaneous moment of shared exhilaration, and grace, between two strangers that generates a healing camaraderie and diminishes the distance between us. She's so expressive it's humbling. Her compliment is the kind of gesture that makes you feel buoyant and kindred. It reminds me how important it is to affirm one another, a powerful gift each of us can give one another but that few, including myself bother to articulate. When we don't, the other person never knows and we both miss out.

Ironic that the reminder comes from someone deemed less decorous or genteel than the rest of us. How heedlessly we make assumptions about people, and how costly our arrogance. Maybe because Lilah is unfettered by some of the social constraints that bind most of us, she's freer to give. And might we not benefit from a reassessment of some of those constraints?

I'm familiar with the mentally ill population. As a kid, my favorite of the seven aunts was a manic-

depressive who spent time on and off over the years in the locked ward of a county mental health facility, and the young cousin to whom I felt closest was a schizophrenic. I saw their hearts as well as their pathology.

"Do you tell stories?" Lilah asks.

How does she know that? "Well, I don't usually tell them out loud, but I do write them down sometimes."

"Oh, tell me a story," she pleads, wide-eyed as a child at bedtime.

Unable to resist her enthusiasm, I do my best despite a greater fluency with the written than the spoken word. Lilah listens intently. Zach is now lying down at our feet, engaged in some serious snoozing. I notice that Lilah has snuggled her toe a few inches under his front paw.

"Are you from New York?" she asks when my story is finished.

I'm taken aback. And however could she know this? I lost my Brooklyn brogue thirty years ago, thank God. But her insights are a little spooky. Like the compliment, I'm beginning to sense that this woman, whose mental disarray has brought her to a place like this, is in some ways more clear-headed than some of the so-called sane people I see out in the world. How much *does* she see?

As we continue chatting, I notice how extraordinarily focused on our conversation Lilah is, and what a pleasure it is talking with her – warm, affectionate, reciprocal. She doesn't have a hint of the gross self involvement or shuck and jive pervasive in so many people I meet in day-to-day encounters. Her candor is refreshing, and I'm honored by her sincere interest in who

I am by the gift of her attention. I've become so engrossed in our chat myself that I nearly forget there are other guests at Fellowship Club with whom I ought to mingle. Reluctantly, Zach and I excuse ourselves.

Half an hour later, as we're leaving, we see Lilah again. She's leaning against a railing outside the front door of the building.

"Where're you walking?" she asks, ambling over.

"My car's just up the street."

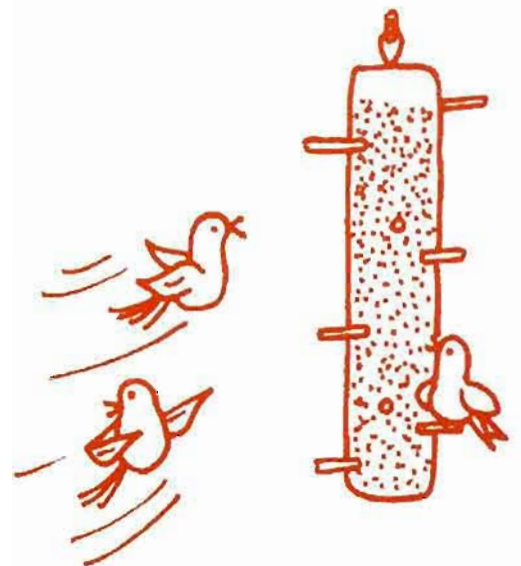
"Can I walk you to your car?"

"Sure."

Zach jumps into the back seat. Lilah caresses his long, floppy ear, lingering over the tip. Then, as I unlock the driver's door and turn to say good-bye, she gives me a hug, a tender, non-clingy, just-right hug.

Cruising up Chapala Street, I realize that I'd forgotten all about the anger I had felt over some annoyance that was still with me when I arrived at Fellowship Club an hour ago. Now all I feel is that the world is new and kind and jasmine-scented.

Lucy Aron is a writer and Delta Society Pet Partner. She adores the ocean, the music of J.S. Bach, and is the proud owner of a wormbox that recycles all her family's kitchen waste.



Healing Connections: Animal Assisted Therapy in the Rehabilitation Unit and Skilled Nursing Facility

Vanessa Shiavi

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a valuable adjunct to traditional therapies. The bond we have with animals is so richly therapeutic because of the close connections we had with animals and the natural world thousands of years ago. Early humans were intimately associated with the behaviors and activities of the animals in their environment because their survival depended upon it. Then, 200 years ago, the Industrial Revolution caused a separation of humans from the care of the natural world. Today, increasing numbers of people are realizing that nurturing animals is beneficial for our health and well being. Our connections with animals have healing capabilities. This dynamic modality, AAT, can be utilized to influence the recovery process, and improve the quality of life of people while they are hospitalized.

The purpose of the AAT program at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital is to increase motivation, interest, and active participation in therapy, to facilitate achievement and carryover of therapeutic goals, while alleviating some of the psychosocial and emotional consequences of hospitalization and immobilization.

The majority of the patients I worked with are geriatric. They are hospitalized for cardiovascular or

cardiopulmonary exacerbations, cerebrovascular accidents, neurological disorders, orthopedic dysfunctions, surgeries, deconditioning from long-term hospitalization for chronic or acute illnesses, cancer treatment, and other disease processes and injuries. These biological changes lead to functional impairments in the performance of their activities of daily living. The interaction of physical events and psychosocial events at a time when support systems and coping mechanisms may be weakened, or absent, may threaten an elderly person's emotional health. Enjoyment of activities may be diminished because of pain and difficulty of performance which may cause people to stop trying or to lose interest in the world around them. Other symptoms of depression may develop such as limited interaction with others, apathy, decreased initiative, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, taking on a more dependent role, and being negativistic. People may also suffer from symptoms of anxiety such as the preoccupation with worry, hyperactivity, agitation, inability to



Therapy Dog Sally with a hospital patient

concentrate, noncompliance, and increased physiological signs of arousal. The motivation of the geriatric patient to strive to achieve functional goals is very difficult when faced with fatigue, discouragement with slow progress, and the stress of adapting to environmental demands on a daily basis.

AAT provides therapeutic, goal-directed interactions through which people may practice and improve their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Interacting with animals may facilitate motivation to participate in therapy

because it is interesting and novel. It may shift the focus of attention away from pain, fatigue, and negative thoughts to another living and responsive creature. Pets give people something to care for, which is important for people who become depressed and stop caring. The experience of giving up produces subtle pathological changes that disorganize the body chemistry, reduce resistance to infectious diseases, and accelerate the progress of chronic degenerative diseases. But, if people maintain patterns of caring and nurturing, they may protect themselves against this helplessness/hopelessness syndrome.

AAT gives people the chance to be nurturers or caregivers which may be absent in their lives while they are in the hospital. People are rewarded by feeling needed by another creature. A sense of self worth and purpose may contribute to increased states of positive feeling.

Other benefits include the promotion of activity through eliciting nurturing responses. Animals need to be fed, walked, watered, brushed, and played with. These are purposeful, functional activities that can be individually structured into successful therapeutic experiences. Performing these activities comes naturally to people. They may not even realize they are working towards their goals. During these activities, people acquire a sense of confidence, control, and mastery, which may prevent feelings of depression and helplessness.

Animal interaction also gives people something to touch and fondle which decreases the physiological symptoms of arousal that can lead to the depression and anxiety that many hospitalized people

experience. The presence of an animal lowers blood pressure and facilitates a relaxation response.

The presence of animals may also facilitate increased social interaction and carryover of communication skills. If an animal is anxiety reducing, it may act as a bridge to reach withdrawn, uncommunicative, and uncooperative people, because they become less threatening and more approachable with an animal present. Animals may also help facilitate group participation, therefore decreasing loneliness and depression.

Our objective as therapists is to motivate and empower people to make choices that will rekindle the body to enact the creative processes associated with reversing disability. AAT provides people with such a creative outlet. Nurturing animals catalyzes a spiritual component to the healing process which involves the integration of the mind, body, and spirit. As health care providers, we must address the spiritual health of people to enable them to develop meaning in their lives, a sense of purpose, and unity with oneself and others during their hospitalization. The spirit is the life-giving and motivating force in humans which we can connect with through providing meaningful activities for the people we treat.

Animals bring out compassionate, joyful, and loving behavior in people. AAT enables them to unite unconditionally and nonjudgmentally with another living being. At a time when they feel the most isolated and lonely because of their illness or hospitalization, AAT replaces a missing dimension to the hospital environment: connection with the natural world.

In order to see a person for

AAT, they have to be interviewed first by their primary therapist to see if they like dogs, have a fear of dogs, or any allergies to them. If they are appropriate for AAT, I have to get clearance from their doctor. Then, the primary therapist is responsible for filling out a referral form with activities they would like me to focus on. These include remembering facts about the dog, picking out biscuits from different containers to give to the dog, petting the dog, brushing it with adapted brushes, giving water to the dog, taking it for walks, giving obedience commands, etc..

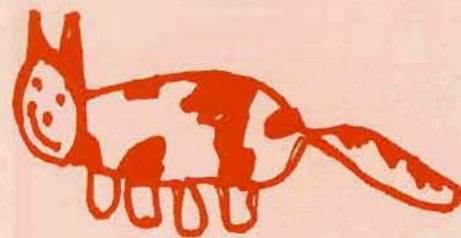
The goals I am trying to accomplish include increasing motivation to come to therapy, active participation, use of affected extremities, self-esteem, well-being, and sensory awareness. I am trying to promote communication, relaxation, visual compensatory techniques, memory skills, problem solving, mobility skills, and caregiving.

AAT can be utilized in various capacities by occupational, physical, speech, recreational therapists, nurses, psychologists, doctors, etc. It can be a valuable modality in the hospital setting.

Vanessa Shiavi is an Occupational Therapist and Animal Assisted Therapy Specialist at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby, Pennsylvania.



*Your chance
to help with
valuable research:*



"This is me and my cat.
My dad treats my cat unfairly,
like he treats my mom."

Jennifer, Age 8

Professor seeks information about SHELTER PROGRAMS FOR ANIMALS IN VIOLENT HOMES

Frank Ascione, Utah State University Psychology Professor and member of Latham's Child and Animal Abuse Prevention (CAAP) Advisory Committee, seeks information about domestic violence programs that have or work with shelters, foster homes or other safe home arrangements for sheltering battered women's companion or farm animals.

Dr. Ascione wants to survey any existing programs or coordinated efforts for sheltering animals of women fleeing abusive relationships to determine which types of programs work best, and what protocols and consent forms should become models. His prior research has already documented that the abusers of over two-thirds of battered women have threatened or hurt their pets, and that half of them have actually killed or hurt a pet, a rate that is fifteen times greater than

men whose partners who do not report domestic violence.

He also found that nearly one in four sheltered battered women said that concern for their pets' welfare had prevented them from going to a shelter sooner.

If you are involved in or know of any domestic violence program's efforts to shelter battered women's animals, please contact Frank R. Ascione, Department of Psychology, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322, telephone 435-797-1446.

e-mail FrankA@fs1.ed.usu.edu



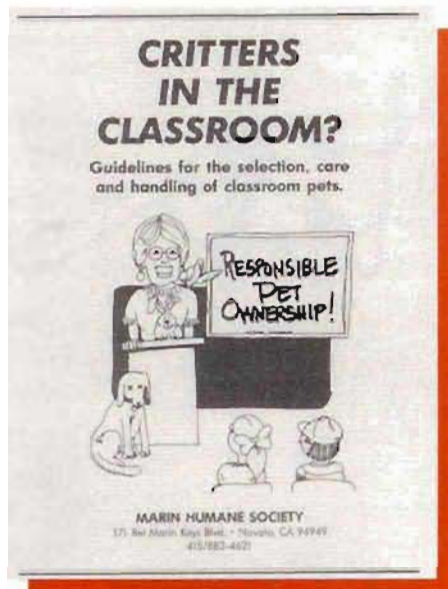
Latham's new book:

*Child Abuse, Domestic
Violence, and Animal
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Edited by:

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Phil Arkow*

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Critters in the Classroom

by Mickey Zeldes

According to the purpose as stated in this guide, these guidelines were written to establish minimum standards for the care and caging of animals kept in classrooms. Many teachers feel that having an animal is a good way to humanize the classroom and teach responsibility and caring. All too frequently, however, humane educators see situations in classrooms that leave them wondering what lesson the students are really learning.

Marin Humane Society feels that having an animal in the classroom can backfire unless it is done properly, with pre-planning and commitment on the part of the teacher. This useful, clearly written guide helps teachers select appropriate pets and house and care for them properly.

As author Zeldes explains, "An animal in the classroom has to be the "teacher's pet." This means that the teacher makes the

commitment to provide a life-long loving home and being the primary caretaker, which includes taking the pet home on weekends and during vacations.

The Latham Foundation agrees that the decision to have a "critter in the classroom" should be an informed and thoughtful one. This guide shows the way.

Critters in the Classroom? Guidelines for the selection, care, and handling of classroom pets

By Mickey Zeldes and the
Marin Humane Society's
Teacher Advisory Board
171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd.
Novato, CA 94949
415-883-4621



PACK OF TWO: The Intricate Bond Between People and Dogs

by Caroline Knapp

At the age of 36, Caroline Knapp, author of the acclaimed bestseller *Drinking: A Love Story*, found herself confronted with a monumental task: redefining her world. She had faced the loss of both her parents, given up a twenty-year relationship with alcohol, and, as she writes, "was wandering around in a haze of uncertainty, blinking up at the biggest questions: Who am I without parents and without alcohol? How to form attachments, and where to find comfort, in the face of such daunting vulnera-

bility?" An answer materialized in the most unlikely form: that of a dog. Eighteen months to the day after she quit drinking, Knapp stumbled upon an eight-week-old puppy at a local animal shelter, took her home, and named her Lucille. Now two years old, Lucille has become a central force in Knapp's life: "In her," she writes, "I have found solace, joy, a bridge to the world."

Caroline Knapp has been celebrated as much for her fresh insight into emotional and psychological issues as she has been for her gifts as a writer. In *Pack of Two*, she brings the same perception and talent to bear on the rich, complicated terrain of human-animal relationships. In addition to mining her wonderful experience with Lucille, Knapp speaks to a wide variety of dog people – from animal behaviorists and psychologists to other owners whose dogs have deeply affected their lives – about this emotionally complex, sometimes daunting, often profoundly healing alliance. Throughout, she explores the shift in canine roles from working partners to intimate companions and looks, too, at how this new kinship, this wordless bond, becomes a template for what we most desire ourselves.

Caroline Knapp's previous book *Drinking: A Love Story*, was published in 1996. She is a contributor at *New Woman* magazine and a regular columnist at the *Boston Phoenix*, and her work has appeared in *Mademoiselle*, *The New York Times*, and numerous international magazines. She is also the author of *Alice K's Guide to Life*.

Pack of Two

By Caroline Knapp
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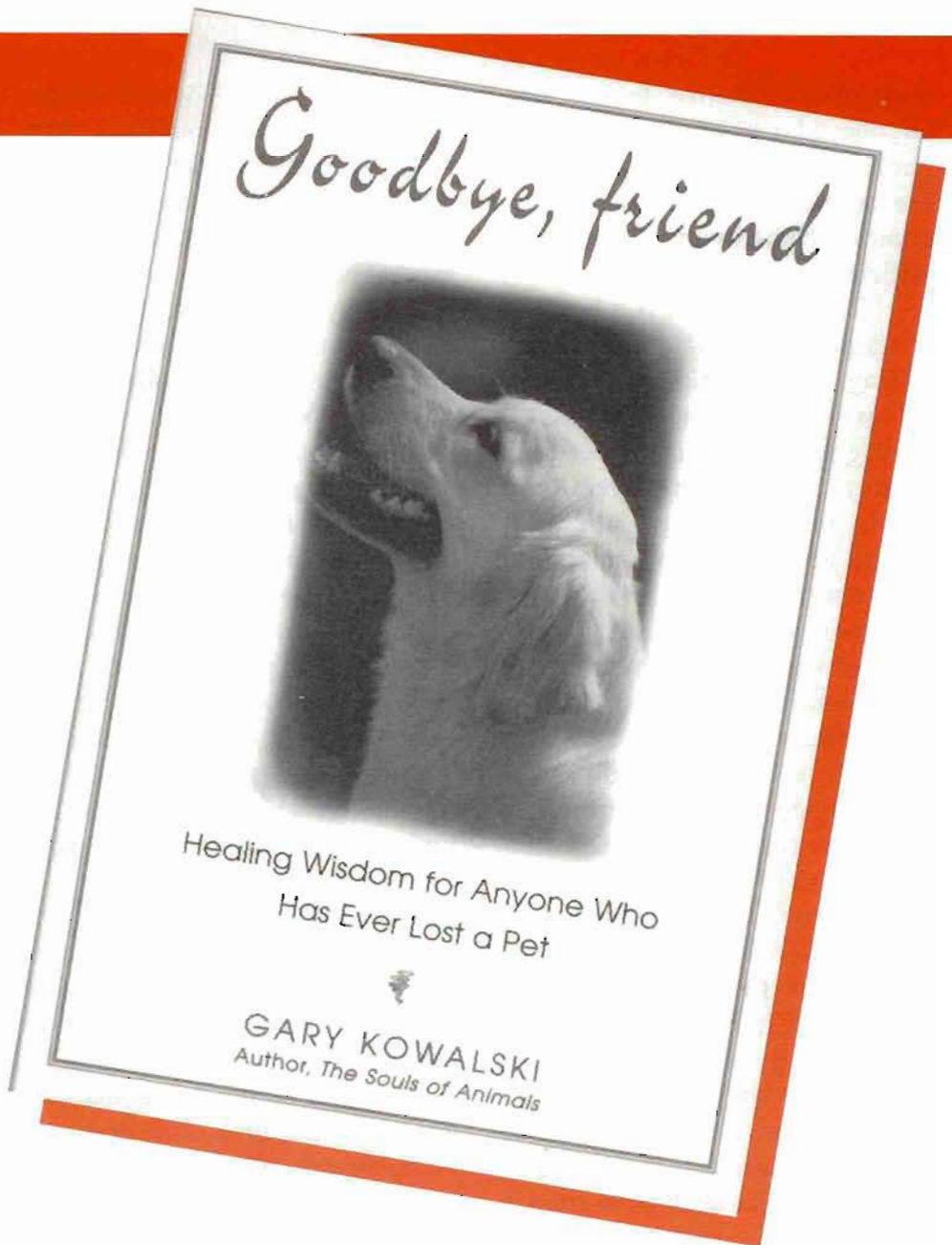


**GOODBYE FRIEND:
Healing Wisdom for
Anyone Who Has Ever
Lost a Pet**

by Gary Kolwalski
Reviewed by Joanne E. Lauck

Ten years ago when I was grieving deeply after euthanizing my dog Leaf, I remember the general lack of support from the people around me. A neighbor dismissed my feelings telling me to "snap out of it." Another friend reminded me that "it was only a dog." Their lack of understanding only added to the pain. An avid reader, I turned to books instead of people looking for something to affirm the deep love I felt for this dog and validate the despair I felt at his absence, but I didn't find one.

Today I might have found and read *Goodbye Friend: Healing Wisdom for Anyone Who Has Ever Lost a Pet*, by Gary Kolwalski, and been greatly comforted. "Every death of a loved one is a loss that warrants grieving," says Kolwalski, whether it is whale, goldfish, dog, or human." Yet, he notes, the suffering we feel when a beloved animal dies is seldom marked by any rituals in our culture, nor does



the family gather for support as they do when a beloved human being dies. "A few people may empathize, but many will not. We are expected to carry on with work and other responsibilities as though nothing serious has happened."

Goodbye Friend's gift to animal lovers is its clear and compassionate acknowledgment that something serious *has* happened when a beloved animal dies – no matter how few understand and how little the culture as a whole honors the loss. Kowalski acknowledges the cultural lag in this area pointing

out that the death of an animal is not even listed in the Social Readjustment Rating Scale that ranks the major causes of stress in our lives and their potentially negative impact. And although many people still act as though animals do not, or should not, matter, not only do they matter, their death, Kowalski points out, has the potential to adversely affect one's health, career, and other relationships. Losing a pet can mean losing a sense of purpose, for example. For the elderly, the death of a pet may be a reminder of

their own mortality. In fact like anyone who has suffered a loss, people whose animals have died are at increased risk of illness, clinical depression, and job related difficulties.

Goodbye Friend is a book of wisdom, as practical as it is inspiring. We are reminded that whatever we do during times of loss, we must grieve. Grieving is not only healthy, but it is imperative if we are to move through our pain toward acceptance and resolution the author reminds us. Filled with suggestions like, "Keep to the familiar when you have experienced loss. Routines are important for both animals and people." Kowalski is keenly aware of how vulnerable we are when we are hurting. He is also aware that grieving is essential if we are to move past the loss and deepen from the experience. His advice: Kindness begins at home and to care for ourselves as the injured and hurting creatures we are. Call a petloss hotline, talk to someone who understands, he suggests. Having others affirm our feelings is important. Just knowing that others have dealt with similar losses helps us to bear our own sorrow.

What I particularly liked was Kowalski's ability to honor our feelings of grief for the loss of a beloved animal as part of love's territory. Love crosses species boundaries and is not contained by cultural ideas of human superiority. And he doesn't diminish the depth of feeling that occurs between a human and an animal by calling it an "attachment," as many do in pet loss explorations that come out of universities – perhaps in an attempt to be scientific. Neither is he concerned about analyzing whether

someone's grief falls within acceptable levels. Kowalski allows room for many levels of grief, noting that our grief will be as individual as we are, although with dependable aspects to it.

"For some people, the death of a pet may represent the greatest loss they have ever encountered," he observes. "We may feel as though we had lost a part of ourselves."

Although the culture and its psychological perspective tends to label extended grieving as pathological, Kowalski suggests that in many cases they are just underestimating the pain involved.

Kowalski writes from his experiences as a Unitarian minister whose congregation turns to him for comfort when their pets die. He understands that having sorrow recognized and validated in a religious setting is deeply comforting to pet owners. He also writes from the experience of a father who has watched his children grieve for their goldfish and from the grief he felt himself as he anticipated the death of Chinook, his dog and companion for many years.

One of the most helpful ideas in the book is his recommendation to perform some action that honors the one who has died. Have a memorial service, he suggests. Write a poem or a letter to the beloved thanking them for their gifts. Kowalski learned just how transforming the spoken word was from speaking the eulogy for his grandfather's death. "It gives voice to the love inside us giving it a power stronger than death." Applying what he learned then to the death of our animal friends, he proposes that we engage in some kind of ceremony as a valid means to hallow time and make it momentous in its

import and significance. "Enacting a ceremony or writing a eulogy that sums up the qualities that made the other memorable and worthy of our care is healing." So is the need to find a suitable resting place for our animal companions. In fact, Kowalski points out, this practice is in accord with the nature of grieving itself because the soil must be turned and broken before new life can take root. A slim volume, *Goodbye Friend* is rich in scope and filled with well chosen examples and stories. Its topics touch on animal's grieving, unexpected deaths and the anger and guilt that can cloud the horizon, euthanasia ("Even when death is consciously chosen, it may still come with a sense of resignation and regret."), when sorrow turns into bitterness, helping our children cope with death, learning from death and making peace with it.

"Animals enrich our lives in countless ways, with their playfulness, their tranquility, their constancy, and their love. If they can help us remember that death is not our enemy but simply one more moment in the world's endless process of becoming, dissolution, and renewal, they will have imparted a final gift." And although death always seems to come too soon, Kowalski gently reminds us: To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven."

GOODBYE FRIEND: Healing Wisdom for Anyone Who Has Ever Lost a Pet

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